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Serbian Artist Driven Crazy By Neglect Of London Picture Critics

By CROSSLAND DAVIES.

LONDON, Oct. 16.—The tragic history of Ralph Albert Blakelock, the wonderful American artist who lost his reason on the eve of success, has a strange, if not exact, parallel in London.

It is the case of a Serbian sculptor of which I am reminded. Let me tell the story as it was told to me. Let me tell it with those decent reservations which the tragedy demands. It might well be that to publish the names would be to add to the grief of those who love him which has already been bitter enough. And I am sure that no newspaper reader would willingly have pain inflicted for the mere satisfaction of a causeless curiosity.

Nor does the name matter. It does not affect the pitifulness of the story. It does not make the facts less worth the telling. Maybe it may do good by serving as a warning to too optimistic artists or too coldly careful critics.

Told in Three Chapters.

The story will best be told in three chapters. The first introduces the tragic retreat of the Serbian nation when overwhelmed by Bulgaria and Austria. In those dark days the Serbs had to leave all they had behind—home and country, too. The majority of them hardly escaped with their lives. This Serbian sculptor was one of them. He got away with his wife and family. His material possessions and his comfortable villa home were left to the ruthless foe. But he managed to save valuable securities and his beloved sculptures. How he managed to fly with all this I do not know, but I do know that he at last reached the safe refuge of London.

So in the second chapter we find him happily at home in the British capital. All his troubles seemed over at last. His securities were enough for him to keep his wife and family in comfort. Out there in Serbia before the war he had been a sculptor of high repute. His work was good. His art was everything to him. London had just everything the work of another Serbian sculptor, Mestrovic. Mestrovic was known to England until an exhibition of his work in London had brought him fame.

The exhibition came just at the time when the heart of England was beating in sympathy with Serbia. The tragic trials of the great little nation had made everything Serbian dear to England. And to Serbian sculpture, represented by the master works of

Mestrovic, had an unexpected and undoubted success. Mestrovic became a popular hero. The rugged, the bizarre strength, the novelty of his work, appealed to a public surfeited with art conventions.

Given an Exhibition. This was the promising situation which faced the competitor of Mestrovic. "I will have an exhibition," he said to his friends. "I will show London that Serbia has more than one good sculptor. I will appeal with my art to the great people of England. It is good art. It must succeed. Such a people, who recognize the greatness of Mestrovic, cannot fail to recognize me. I have only to show it to them and success is mine."

So he arranged an exhibition to follow immediately after Mestrovic's. A gallery was hired. The usual announcements were made to the press. The customary invitations to the art critics were issued. There was nothing more to do but await the plaudits of the press and the people. One short week and success would be his. It was on the happiest periods in a life of stress and struggle. At last fame was within his reach. He knew his work justified his hopes. I know it did. One of the greatest British artists who afterwards saw it, assured me that it was really fine. The man was second Mestrovic. That is the story of the second chapter. It should be headed "Great Expectations."

Tragedy of Chilling Silence. The third chapter is the story of a tragedy of chilling silence. The poor artist did not know the strange ways of publicity or popular success. He did not realize that there could not be two Mestrovics. It did not occur to him that where one Serbian sculptor might win a great success with the sophisticated London public a second would fail. The exhibition was opened. Never a line about it appeared in the press. No photographs were reproduced in the illustrated journals. No one came to the gallery. This went on for seven long intolerable days. London turned its back upon the artist. He was not even named with faint praise. He was killed by cold neglect. The Mestrovic's crash had spoiled his chances. The first Serbian sculptor, with a new style, was "new." Others who followed were "stale news."

Within a week of the failure of all his fondest hopes, the artist was in a private asylum. His mind had gone. The refusal of the critics and the people even to look at his work had broken him. From time to time pathetic letters reached his friends. He had the unalterable impression that he was a victim of persecution; that someone was seeking his life. Outside that delusion he could talk and get quite sane. It was his dearest wish to meet a celebrated British artist and discuss art with him. The wish was gratified—but his sanity did not return.

This is a true story. And it has a moral or two which I do not propose to draw. But for the sake of his wife and family I refrain from disclosing the artist's identity. After all, why should I tell you his name? If I did would you be any the wiser? I think not.

BOY HANGS HIMSELF AFTER REPRIMAND

BALTIMORE, Oct. 16.—Howell Burton Beall, eleven-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene E. Beall, hanged himself by a necktie to a bedpost yesterday after a reprimand for mischievous conduct. The boy was said by the family physician to be a healthy, normal child.

Owing to the fact that his sister, Pauline, two years older, had been stricken with diphtheria recently, and that he had been in contact with her and was a germ-bearer, although his culture was negative, young Beall had been confined to the same room with the child for the last two weeks, the only attendant being Mrs. Beall. It is believed that the confinement preyed upon his spirits, as the boy ordinarily was very active. The boy is said to have spent a great deal of his time looking out the window. He was not sick and not confined to his bed.

According to his father, the boy was released from confinement yesterday afternoon, when the health board authorities fumigated the room. In the afternoon, Mr. Beall said, the boy was sent to his room because of a prank. As he had been quiet for some time and did not answer when called, Mrs. Beall, the boy's stepmother, at 5:40 p. m., went to the room, which is on the second floor. Upon seeing the body she called to Mr. Beall, who rushed upstairs and removed the necktie, which was in a slipknot around the boy's neck. A doctor was summoned, but the child was dead.

LOST \$15 WHILE PRAYING. GEORGETOWN, Del., Oct. 16.—While John Day was praying with one of his sick friends, two boys stole \$15 he had in a satchel in his baggy. Warrants were issued for their arrest. One boy, Edward Messick, escaped, but the other, Elden Hudson, was captured and confessed.

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SAYS JAPAN FORCES VICE UPON KOREA

Dr. Rhee Declares Women and Opium Have Been Introduced Into Nation.

PRINCETON, N. J., Oct. 16.—In an address last night before Princeton University students, Dr. Byungman Rhee, president of the Republic of Korea, charged Japan with introducing licensed vice and the importation of women and opium into Korea for commercial purposes.

"All the products of illicit traffic and licensed vice go into the coffers of the Mikado, while the government expenses are paid by direct taxes," Rhee declared.

"Japan has sought to prevent our publishing these facts," said Rhee. "She suppressed all the newspapers, censored all the radio, sealed the telephone and telegraph lines, and does not allow Koreans to leave the country. Licensed vice and opium traffic are introduced and fostered by the imperial government of Japan, while thousands of acres of poppies are planted and the products sold only to the government."

Dr. Rhee's address at Princeton is the first of a series of addresses against Japan's mandate over Korea.

L. W. W. LUMBER MEN DEMAND FREE BATH

SPOKANE, Wash., Oct. 16.—Lumber Workers' Industrial Union, No. 500, Industrial Workers of the World, has called a strike in logging camps in eastern Washington, northern Idaho and western Montana, according to advice received here today.

Demand of the lumber workers include release of all "class war" prisoners, immediate withdrawal of troops from Russia, minimum wage scale of \$5 a day, not more than 11 a day for board, eight hours from camp to camp, free blankets, sheets and pillows, bathroom, dry room and wash room be furnished seven days a week, right of free speech, free press and free assembly, all men be hired on the job and not through employment offices and no discrimination against union men.

\$150,000 JEWELS STOLEN IN N. Y.

Taken From Steel Box In Apartment While Owner Was On Trip.

NEW YORK, Oct. 16.—The theft of jewels valued at between \$100,000 and \$150,000 from the apartment of Mrs. Leyla Brandeis was reported to the police yesterday. Mrs. Brandeis is the widow of H. H. Brandeis, who with two brothers founded the department store in Omaha, Neb., which bears their name.

According to the list supplied the police the stolen gems included a large rope of pearls, a diamond necklace, several diamond pins, rings and other articles, which had been given to Mrs. Brandeis by her husband. Mrs. Brandeis visited her mother, Mrs. Wilbur F. Studebaker, on Long Island, over the week-end. When she returned to her apartment she found a steel box in which the jewels had been kept lying empty on the bathroom floor, having been wrenched from the wall of the closet into which it was built.

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Several hundred of them offered tomorrow fashioned of Lyons and Panne Velvets, Fur Tams, Burnt Ostrich, Burnt Goose, Feather Hats, Hand Embroidered, Velours with-beaver facings, and many others.

Government Employees

We will remain open during this sale Friday and Saturday until 7 p. m. Government checks cashed.

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